sistence, in the heritage of British literature, endeared to them by a community of language and historical association. And, when a few of the busy denizens of a new republic ventured to give expression to their thoughts, it was equally natural that the spirit and the principles of their ancestral literature should reappear. Scenery, border-life, the vicinity of the aborigines, and a great political experiment were the only novel features in the new world upon which to found anticipations of originality; in academic culture, habitual reading, moral and domestic tastes, and cast of mind, the Americans were identified with the mother country; and in all essential particulars, would naturally follow the style thus inherent in their natures and confirmed by habit and study. At first, therefore, the literary development of the United States was imitative; but with the progress of the country, and her increased leisure and means of education, the writings of the people became more and more characteristic; and theological disputations, as manifested among the various sects of Protestanism, gradually ceased to be the exclusive moulds of thought.

The great defect of our literature in the beginning has been a lack of independence, and too exclusive a deference to hackneyed models; there has been and is no deficiency of intellectual life: it has thus far, however, often proved too diffusive for great results. Oratory is eminently the literature of republics. Political freedom gives both occasion and impulse to thought on public interests; and its expression is a requisite accomplishment to every intelligent and patriotic citizen. American eloquence, although not unknown in the professional spheres of colonial life, developed with originality, and richness at the epoch of the revolution. Indeed, the question that agitated the country naturally induced popular discussions, and as a sense of wrong and a resolve to maintain the rights of freemen, took the place of remonstrance and argument, a race of orators seems to have sprung to life, whose chief traits continue evident in a long and illustrious roll of names, identified with our statesmen, legislators and divines. From the Most Rev. Archbishop Carroll, who by his writings in defence of truth and justice, has endeared himself to all lovers of liberty, to the stripling Hamilton, who, in July, 1774, held a vast concourse in breathless excitement, in the fields near New York, while he demonstrated the right and necessity of resistance to British oppression, there has been a series of remarkable public speakers who have nobly illustrated this branch of literature in the United States. The fame of American eloquence is in part traditionary. Warren, Adams, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and Otis in Boston, and Patrick Henry in Virginia, by their spirit-stirring appeals, roused the land to the assertion and defence of its just rights; and Alexander Hamilton, Morris Pinkney, Jay Rutledge, and other firm and gifted men gave wise and effective direction to the power thus evoked, by their logical and earnest appeals, At the time the contest began, there were in each colony some men already honored by their fellow citizens, already well known in the defence of public liberty, influential by their property, talent, or character; faithful to the ancient virtues, yet friendly to modern improvement; sensible to the splendid advantages of civilization, and yet attached to simplicity of manners; high-toned in their feelings, but of modest minds, at the same time ambitious and prudent in their patriotic impulses. Foremost among these remarkable men was Alexander Hamilton, by birth a West Indian, by descent uniting the Scotch vigor and sagacity of character with the accomplishment of the French. While a collegian in New York, his